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Identical letters dated 23 January 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to forward herewith a letter from Her Highness Sheikha Mozha bint Nasser Al-Missned, the Consort of His Highness the Emir of the State of Qatar, addressed to Ambassador Jean-Maurice Ripert, Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations and President of the Security Council (see annex).

I would appreciate it if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 64, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Nassir Abdulaziz **Al-Nasser**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

09-22065 (E) 280109

Annex to the identical letters dated 23 January 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

[Original: Arabic]

Doha, 15 January 2009

As you are aware, on 4 January 2009, I addressed the Secretary-General of the United Nations regarding the shameful situation in Gaza. I expressed particular concern over the targeting of civilians and such civilian institutions as places of worship, schools and hospitals, in a manner that contravenes the most basic rights accorded by religious law and international conventions.

In my capacity as Chairperson of the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development and as President of the International Organization for the Protection of Educational Institutions and their Employees in Crisis Areas, the headquarters of which are in Qatar, I reiterate through you my profound condemnation of and concern over the collective punishment and direct targeting to which the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip is being subjected as a consequence of the attacks launched from air and sea and the ground invasion.

Given that the situation is seriously deteriorating, I would like, in my capacity as Special Envoy for Basic and Higher Education of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), to express my profound condemnation of the damage being inflicted on educational institutions and schools, and the direct and deliberate targeting of children and teachers by Israeli forces with no regard for the protected status of such institutions and, in particular, those run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). As you are aware, Israeli occupation forces targeted the Fakhura School in the Jabaliya refugee camp, where defenceless civilians had taken refuge, leaving 43 dead and over 100 injured.

The eyes of the world are currently on the United Nations and, in particular, the Security Council, in the expectation that it will shoulder its responsibility to protect Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip, especially in view of the fact that the Council will, in the forthcoming few days, convene an open debate on the protection of civilians. I join my voice to those calling for the Security Council and its members to meet their political, moral and humanitarian obligations to the Palestinian people and the peoples of the region by conducting an investigation into the crimes that have been committed against Palestinian civilians and adopting a resolution containing effective measures to halt ongoing violations of human rights law and international humanitarian law with respect to Palestinian civilians. Such a resolution must be guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and take into account the commitments consequent upon that Charter and other international legal instruments, including the Fourth Hague Convention of 1907; the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, including the provisions of the First Protocol to that Convention which are applicable to the situation in Occupied Palestinian Territory; and United Nations Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) of 8 January

2009 on the tragic situation in the Gaza Strip, as well as other previous resolutions relating to the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.

In my capacity as Special Envoy for Basic and Higher Education of UNESCO, I remind the President of the Council that Security Council resolution 1612 (2005) established a Working Group of the Security Council on Children and Armed Conflict and that paragraph 2 thereof called for a monitoring and reporting mechanism on children and armed conflict to address grave violations perpetrated against children in armed conflicts, which include the killing and maiming of children and attacks against schools.

Through you, I make a direct appeal to the Security Council to request the Secretary-General to report to it at the earliest opportunity on the status of Palestinian children in the Gaza Strip and the killing, maiming and displacement they have suffered, and on the deadly attacks carried out against schools and educational institutions, including the UNRWA Fakhura School in the Jabaliya camp. Such a report should be submitted with a view to the adoption by the Council of a resolution containing effective measures to halt the ongoing violations of human rights law and international humanitarian law to which children in the Gaza Strip are being subjected, and ensure that the occupying Power, Israel, is held responsible for its violations of international law and that the perpetrators are held accountable and punished for their acts.

This is a matter of importance, because the continued targeting of those institutions leaves Palestinian citizens with no safe havens from the indiscriminate aggression. We turn to the Security Council to take this necessary step in accordance with the provisions of international human rights law and international humanitarian law relating to the protection of civilian targets, including educational institutions and those who work in and benefit from them, in order to relieve the devastated people of Gaza and to hold accountable and punish the perpetrators for their acts.

The Council has no other option but to investigate, uncover the facts, and adopt a resolution containing effective measures to halt the ongoing violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and present the incontrovertible evidence needed to hold the criminals accountable and punish them for the crimes they have perpetrated against Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip.

Our peoples expect to see as soon as possible the outcome of the investigations and the measures taken in that regard by the Council.

(*Signed*) Mozah bint Nasser **Al-Misnad**